United Nations A/67/PV.63

General Assembly
Sixty-seventh session

Official Records

63rd plenary meeting
Tuesday, 22 January 2013, 11.25 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Jeremić ..... (Serbia)

The meeting was called to order at 11.25 a.m.

Agenda item 134 (*continued*)

Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations (A/67/693 and A/67/693/Add.1)

The President: Before proceeding to the other items on our agenda, I would like, in keeping with the established practice, to draw the attention of the General Assembly to documents A/67/693 and A/67/693/Add.1. In document A/67/693, the Secretary-General informs the President of the General Assembly that 22 Member States are in arrears in the payment of their financial contributions to the United Nations within the terms of Article 19 of the Charter.

I would like to remind delegations that, under Article 19 of the Charter,

> "A Member of the United Nations which is in arrears in the payment of its financial contributions to the Organization shall have no vote in the General Assembly if the amount of its arrears equals or exceeds the amount of the contributions due from it for the preceding two full years".

In document A/67/693/Add.1, the Secretary-General informs the Assembly that, since the issuance of his communication contained in document A/67/693, Fiji and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia have made the necessary payments to reduce their arrears below the amount specified in Article 19 of the Charter.

May I take it that the General Assembly takes note of the information contained in these documents?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 7 (*continued*)

Organization of work, adoption of agenda and allocation of items

The President: Representatives will recall that, at its 2nd plenary meeting, on 21 September 2012, the General Assembly allocated sub-item (a) of agenda item 20 to the Second Committee. In order for the Assembly to proceed expeditiously on this sub-item, may I take it that the Assembly agrees to consider this sub-item directly in plenary meeting and to proceed immediately to its consideration?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 20 (*continued*)

Sustainable development

(a) Implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development and of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development

Draft decision (A/67/L.48/Rev.1)

The President: We shall now proceed to consider draft decision A/67/L.48/Rev.1.

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-506. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

I now give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Botnaru (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): In connection with draft decision A/67/L.48/Rev.1, entitled "General Assembly Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals", I wish to put on record the following statement on financial implications on behalf of the Secretary-General, in accordance with rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly.

In sub-paragraph (a) of the draft decision, the General Assembly decides "to establish the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals called for in paragraph 248 of the outcome document".

With reference to that paragraph, the resource requirements in relation to the establishment of the Open Working Group have been included in the report of the Secretary-General (A/67/591) on the revised estimates resulting from the decisions contained in the outcome document (resolution 66/288, annex) of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, entitled "The future we want". Accordingly, draft decision A/67/L.48/Rev.1 does not entail financial implications for the programme budget for the biennium 2012-2013.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of France.

Mrs. Montel (France) (*spoke in French*): I would like to point out that the French translation of document A/67/L.48/Rev.1 refers to an "Open-ended Working Group" of the General Assembly, which is not the correct translation of "Open Working Group". I therefore request that the Secretariat reflect the translation that appeared in paragraph 248 of the French version of the original outcome document (resolution 66/288, annex) as adopted, namely, "Open Working Group of the General Assembly".

The President: The Secretariat will take note of the statement by the representative of France.

Statement by the President

The President: In a few moments, Member States will hopefully adopt a draft decision establishing the Open Working Group of the General Assembly on Sustainable Development Goals. Its establishment has long been overdue and I truly welcome that development.

I would like to extend my genuine, heartfelt appreciation to the facilitator, Her Excellency Mrs. Maria Luiza Ribeiro Viotti, Permanent Representative of the Federative Republic of Brazil, for her hard work and dedicated efforts in getting us to this point. Months of consultations, as we all know, were required, often producing deadlocked positions. As a result, we have fallen behind schedule, which is hardly encouraging.

The task that is now before us is of fundamental importance. Last June in Rio de Janeiro, this body was given the responsibilty to adopt sustainable development goals (SDGs). I believe this is a strategic issue of the first order, one that may frame much of the United Nations work for decades to come. Our duty is to do all that is in our power to narrow the gap between the haves and the have-nots. We should aim to transform failing States and to empower those who long for peace and reconciliation. We ought to band together to defeat extremists and embolden those who are ready to forsake vengeance. We should strive to re-energize the disarmament and non-proliferation regimes and to eliminate the scourge of human trafficking. We have to go on the offensive against organized crime and take on the root causes of terrorism. We must endeavour to strengthen the rule of law and to champion international solidarity.

It is hard to imagine the fulfilment of such aspirations without clearly defined development benchmarks. In the time ahead, the proposed Open Working Group needs to establish new goals to eradicate poverty and hunger; encourage scientific and technological innovation; raise health-care and education standards; set renewable and clean-energy targets; and decide on ways to protect and manage our finite natural resources, among many other things. To do what is right for the world, those tasks have to be taken up with genuine passion.

During the resumed part of the sixty-seventh session, I will closely engage with Member States to ensure that the SDG process becomes a top priority, while putting the work of the Group at the very centre of our attention. Just an hour ago we heard the Secretary-General talk about his priorities for 2013. The first one he mentioned was sustainable development.

I am also ready to help the appointed facilitators of the intergovernmental process to propose options for an effective financing-for-development strategy, as well as those tasked with creating the high-level forum

and preparing the special event on the Millennium Development Goals during the sixty-eighth session.

We will need to further enhance coordination among the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the Secretariat. We must continue to reinforce and complement each other's efforts, so that a single, fully coherent post-2015 agenda results from this process.

In conclusion, I believe that it is of critical importance that the Open Working Group begin its substantive deliberations as soon as possible. I will therefore schedule the Group's inaugural meeting for early February. In the meanwhile, my Office will take an active interest in consultations on the procedural matters that need to be sorted out before the Group can begin its work in earnest.

As President of the General Assembly, I am ready to give the Group my full attention, so that by the end of its sixty-seventh session, it may be well be on its way to fulfilling the task of formulating sustainable development goals.

I believe that this is a moment for us to imagine the future and to decide on new ways to address global challenges to truly define the world we want and the United Nations we need to make such a vision a reality. With energetic leadership and the full institutional support of the United Nations system, we should seize this generational opportunity and craft a global framework to ensure that our children inherit a planet where no nation is left behind.

The Assembly will now take action on draft decision A/67/L.48/Rev.1, entitled "Open Working Group of the General Assembly on Sustainable Development Goals".

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft decision A/67/L.48/Rev.1?

The draft decision was adopted.

The President: Before giving the floor to those representatives who wish to speak in explanation of position, may I remind delegations that explanations are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Muñoz (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation is pleased to deliver this statement on the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals on behalf of the delegations of Mexico and Peru.

We welcome the adoption of this draft decision, which will allow us to begin the process of defining sustainable development goals. The decision is based on a joint proposal submitted by Colombia, Guatemala and Peru. We are convinced that this is a unique opportunity to begin a process of change and revitalization of the Organization's development agenda. We therefore believe that the process we are initiating today should dovetail with that of defining the post-2015 development agenda and result in boosting the Organization's capacity to contribute to resolving the pressing problems of today.

We believe that there is an urgent need to bring together the various unconnected efforts with regard to the Organization's development agenda. We must benefit from synergies and avoid squandering resources of any sort — limited as they are — and do so through a revised strategic framework. The United Nations must not have various parallel development agendas. We need a single, integrated agenda under which, once and for all, we agree on the singularity of development, with various mutually complementary pillars that strengthen one another.

Moreover, we believe that, in seeking an open process that incorporates the proposals of all Member States, it will be necessary to ensure ways by which civil society can participate more actively and more directly in discussions on the development agenda. We believe that the enduring value expected of the Open Working Group will depend greatly upon the achievement of that major goal.

In conclusion, I would like to highlight the effective efforts of the facilitator of the negotiations on this decision, Ambassador Maria Luiza Ribeiro Viotti, Permanent Representative of Brazil, whom we sincerely thank.

Mr. Escalona Ojeda (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for convening this important meeting. I also thank all members for the consensus adoption of this important decision. In particular, I would like to thank the Ambassador of Brazil for all her efforts in facilitating the adoption of today's decision. We would also like to thank the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States for their efforts to arrive at agreements on the issue of representation.

Finally, I call for the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals to truly be an open

working group wherein every State has an opportunity to express itself. I also hope that its conclusions can be arrived at unanimously through an inclusive and transparent negotiating process.

Mr. Dhanapala (Sri Lanka): Sri Lanka fully supports your efforts, Sir, to ensure that the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals is effective, under the leadership of the Asia-Pacific Group. I would like to thank my colleagues from India and Pakistan, who will work with us in the Open Working Group.

We have discussed this process over the past several months and should now stop wasting time on procedural matters. Therefore, we request you, Sir, and the General Assembly to begin to address substantive issues immediately. We are pleased to participate in the Open Working Group with other Member States who have expressed a willingness to work.

Sri Lanka extends its fullest cooperation to you, Sir, in your efforts in this endeavour.

Mr. Aisi (Papua New Guinea): I join other speakers in thanking you, Mr. President, for convening this important meeting and for your guidance and leadership in helping us to achieve this important first step of those needed to realize the provisions of paragraph 248 of the Rio+20 outcome document (resolution 66/288, annex), which enhances our joint quest towards realizing the future we want.

After consulting with my colleagues in the Asia-Pacific States Group, I now speak on their behalf.

Among the various matters we agreed upon in Rio de Janeiro was that we should work towards establishing an Open Working Group to develop a set of sustainable development goals to guide a large part of our work on the post-2015 agenda. With the unanimous adoption of today's decision, we have taken an important step in our quest to achieve the collective vision set out in paragraph 248 of the Rio+20 document.

In that regard, let me thank our colleague Ambassador Maria Luiza Ribeiro Viotti of Brazil for her equally strong and steadfast leadership in ensuring that this most critical step — the establishment of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals — could be taken. I also commend her colleagues at the Permanent Mission of Brazil for their tireless efforts and support in that achievement. I recall expressing the Asia-Pacific Group's support for this decision during a meeting on 9 January chaired by Ambassador Viotti. We are pleased that we have today adopted the draft decision by consensus.

It is the considered view of the Asia-Pacific Group that it is imperative that the Open Working Group commence its work immediately in order to

> "decide on its methods of work, including developing modalities to ensure the full involvement of relevant stakeholders and expertise from civil society, the scientific community and the United Nations system in its work, in order to provide a diversity of perspectives and experience." (*resolution 66/248, annex, para. 248*)

In conclusion, we must remind ourselves that the Open Working Group is required to submit a report containing a proposal for sustainable development goals to the General Assembly at its sixty-eighth session for its consideration and appropriate action. It is therefore urgent that the Open Working Group commence its work forthwith. We appreciate your leadership, Sir, in convening a meeting of the Open Working Group shortly.

Let me assure you, Sir, of the support of the Asia-Pacific Group in the setting up and work of the Open Working Group, especially the support of our Group's members who will serve on the Working Group.

Mr. Ruiz (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): As one of the main advocates for establishing an Open Working Group to define sustainable development goals, Colombia could not pass up this opportunity, first, to thank the Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Brazil for her work, which has made it possible for us to adopt this decision establishing the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals.

I would like, Mr. President, to take advantage of your recently reiterated readiness to strengthen and support all the work of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals to ask that you convene the Group as soon as possible, so that we can make up the time we have lost in the course of discussing its establishment.

As the representative of France has done, I too would request that the Spanish version of the decision just adopted accurately reflect the letter of the outcome document (resolution 66/288, annex) of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development,

namely, "Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals".

The President: The Secretariat will take note of the request of the representative of Colombia.

I can assure the representative of Colombia that I will convene the Open Working Group as soon as I return from Africa, which I will visit to consult with leaders on the forthcoming work of the Group.

I would like to reiterate that I am prepared to devote the full scope of my attention not just to the commencement of the Group's work, but also to its ongoing deliberations. I truly believe in the importance of its work.

The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of sub-item (a) of agenda item 20.

Agenda item 121 (*continued*)

(e) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Caribbean Community

Draft resolution (A/67/L.53)

The President: Members will recall that the General Assembly held the debate on agenda item 121 and its sub-items (a) to (w) at its 40th plenary meeting, on 19 November 2012.

I now give the floor to the representative of Belize to introduce draft resolution A/67/L.53.

Mrs. Coye-Felson (Belize): I am pleased to introduce draft resolution A/67/L.53, entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Caribbean Community", on behalf of the member States of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and all our friends who have sponsored the draft resolution.

As documented in the Secretary-General's report contained in document A/67/280, the Caribbean Community continues to benefit from direct engagement with the Secretariat, as well as with the specialized agencies, funds and programmes of the United Nations. The draft resolution before the plenary welcomes that cooperation. It further requests the continued support and assistance of the Secretary-General and the United Nations system to promote and expand cooperation with the States members of the Caribbean Community so that they can more robustly confront the challenges manifest in the region. Although the challenges are global, including the ongoing impact of the world financial and economic crisis, food insecurity, climate change, transnational organized crime and non-communicable diseases, they are particularly acute in our region, given the level of integration in the Caribbean Community, our small open economics, our young demography and our geography. It is for that reason that the draft resolution also calls upon the United Nations to intensify its assistance to CARICOM, bearing in mind its vulnerabilities.

Moving forward, the Caribbean Community encourages the United Nations to develop concrete projects in the areas that the two organizations have identified for strategic collaboration, namely, the implementation of the single market and economy, sustainable development, regional security, food security and food safety, human development, information and communication technology, and institutional development. In refining the focus within those areas, it is important that we work towards an optimal impact on the ground and proper monitoring and follow-up. A coherent approach to the partnership among the United Nations system, the CARICOM secretariat and the Member States themselves will therefore be critical, as will the strong presence of the United Nations in the region.

Regrettably, United Nations representation has decreased most significantly in the critical areas of security and regional development. We cannot emphasize enough the point that the United Nations commitment to supporting CARICOM in achieving its objectives must go hand in hand with its commitment to remain on the ground.

We consider the seventh meeting of representatives of CARICOM and the United Nations an opportunity to make progress on those issues and to move beyond dialogue and on to action.

CARICOM reiterates its firm commitment to multilateralism and to the United Nations as the principal forum for multilateral cooperation. CARICOM member States will continue to work towards enhancing our support to the United Nations and through our regional organization to attain the mutual objectives of peace, security, development and respect for human rights.

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/67/L.53, entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Caribbean Community".

I give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Botnaru (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): I should like to announce that, since the submission of the draft resolution and in addition to those delegations listed in that document, the following countries have also become sponsors of draft resolution A/67/L.53: Australia, Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Costa Rica, Cuba, El Salvador, Estonia, Ethiopia, Georgia, Greece, Honduras, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Lithuania, Montenegro, New Zealand, Slovenia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Uruguay.

The President: May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/67/L.53?

Draft resolution A/67/L.53 was adopted (resolution 67/249).

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of sub-item (c) of agenda item 121?

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at noon.